and we swore on that day, that it'll never fall apart by badseede (goodeapple)

Series: six little monkeys [1]
Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)
Genre: Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence, Alternate Universe - Gender Changes, Billy Hargrove Needs Love, D&D, Dustin Henderson is a Good Friend, Eleven | Jane Hopper & Maxine "Max" Mayfield Friendship, F/M, Female Steve Harrington, Fluff, Friendship, Genderbending, Genderswap, Good Babysitter Steve Harrington, Hurt/Comfort, Minor Injuries, Multi, Pre-teens being dicks and nosey, Protective Dustin Henderson, Teasing, The author knows nothing about D&D, please forgive her
Language: English
Characters: Billy Hargrove, Dustin Henderson, Eleven | Jane Hopper, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Steve Harrington, Will Byers
Relationships: Billy Hargrove/Steve Harrington
Status: Completed
Published: 2018-07-11
Updated: 2018-07-11
Packaged: 2022-04-22 05:09:25
Rating: Mature
Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply
Chapters: 1
Words: 3,363
Publisher: archiveofourown.org
Summary:

Stevie babysits like usual, Billy is beat up like usual, and Dustin witnesses something... unusual.

-

female!Steve

and we swore on that day, that it'll never fall apart

“But he’s earlyyy,” Max grumbles as Stevie helps her shrug on her heavy coat and lace up her boots, ignoring the annoying roar of a familiar engine in the driveway.

It took all of two days of just a hint of flurries in the air before Susan had dragged Max down to the nearest clothing store and stocked up on everything short of snow skis. Stevie had heard through the grapevine that Susan had also brought Billy along on the shopping trip, and Stevie had laughed herself silly at the mental image of the new King of Hawkins, his ever bare chest suddenly swaddled in a thick wool coat and scarves layered up to his chin.

Each time Stevie had seen Max when she was picking up Dustin from A.V. Club, the tiny redhead had been clad in a different colored jacket and knit cap. Hell, Max apparently has accumulated more snow gear than Stevie has, and Stevie’s lived in Indiana almost her whole life.

Stevie chuckles softly as she shoves a beanie down around Max’s ears, musing up her hair and covering her eyes.

“Life isn’t fair kid, get used to it.” Stevie says good naturedly, choosing to ignore the glare Max shoots her as Max tries to rustle down the messy strands of red hair sticking out from her cap.

As her fingers rake through the knots, she catches Lucas’ stare out of the corner of her eye. Feeling heat spread across the high plains of her cheeks, Max haughtily raises a thin eyebrow in question, arms crossing as much as they can due to the fluffy down in her coat.

“Aren't you supposed to be playing your little game, Stalker?” Max can’t help but let the old nickname slip out, now laced with a sweet lilt instead of an annoyed one.

Lucas ducks his head quickly, but his lips spread out to reveal a pearly white smile. Raising his chin with a barely noticeable blush coloring his face, he shrugs his shoulders in a so-so manner.

“S-Something more interesting caught my eye,” the slight stutter in his words makes him cuter than a button in Stevie’s humble opinion, and Max must agree because she bites her lip softly and unconsciously twists her fingers in her now straightened out hair.

Dustin though, doesn’t seem to agree, as he gags into his hand.

“Really dude?” Dustin scoffs, opposite from Lucas at the formal dining table that Stevie’s parents have used less than ten times in her life.

“ *S-s-s-something more int-t-teresting caught my eye-e-e,* ” Will covers up a snort with a cough, as Eleven grins behind her cup of Kool-Aid at Dustin’s stuttering mess of a mock imitation of Lucas’ voice. “Get a hold of yourself, my God.”

The faint red on Lucas’ cheeks now bloomed hot and bright on his dark skin, anger flaring up in his eyes. “Whatever man, you’re just jealous,” Lucas spits, twisting away from Max in his chair and crossing his arms stiffly.

Dustin barks out a noise that’s a cross somewhere between a laugh and a scoff. Not even sparing a glance at his angry friend, he chooses to shuffle through the papers that hold all the inner-workings to the game that Stevie knows fuck-all about.

“Yeaahhh, I’m jealous of suddenly forgetting how to speak a simple sentence. Real green with envy over here.”

“Man, shut the hell up,” Lucas sneers, trying to drop the argument before he does something stupid out of anger. He’s already done that with one of his friends before and it got him telepathically thrown across a junkyard. He doesn’t need a repeat of that, thank you.

Dustin, having not experienced that for himself, doesn’t get the memo.

“Oh, what’re you gonna do? Wrist Rocket me to death? I’m shaking in my boots.”

Dustin rolls his eyes and turns to finally face Lucas, who's about two seconds away from saying *fuck the inevitable telepathic violence* and launching himself over the table and strangling his best friend.

Three sharp raps of knuckle against heavy oak saves Dustin's life by mere seconds.

Stevie straightens sharply, helping Max pull on her backpack to rest on her now too plushy shoulders.

Stevie jogs across the living room to the red double doors, and pulls open one of them to greet the knocker. A soft gasp, barely audible but still loud enough, catches the kids' attention and they turn to see what's caught their babysitter's eye.

"Oh, Billy," Max breathes out as she saddles up to Stevie's back, and gets a good look at the sight that's in front of her. Dustin tilts back onto the legs of his chair to see why Stevie suddenly looks a little green around the gills.

Maybe the gashed up mess that's Billy Hargrove's left eyebrow wouldn't look so bad if the dried blood trails painting the coinciding side of his face didn't make him look like he just lost a fight to an angry bobcat, but it does and he looks like shit.

The fake shiny smile that's spread across his mouth makes him look even more like a psychopath then he usually does.

"Heard there was a party goin' on, thought I'd drop by," the false cheeriness in Billy's voice complimented by the fresh ooze of blood from his eyebrow is more than a little disconcerting.

The silence that follows is deafening.

Max shifts her weight from foot to foot awkwardly, ringing her gloved hands together and struggling to find the right thing to respond with. Stevie comes up with something before she can.

“You’re bleeding.”

Nice one, Stevie.

Billy’s grin drops off his face in a flash and he gives a dramatic roll of his eyes.

“Really Harrington, I hadn’t noticed.” Billy rummages around in his back pocket before pulling out a crumpled pack of cigarettes and shoving one between his teeth.

Max wrinkles her nose as Billy flips open his lighter and takes a deep inhale, and then exhales right in her direction. He gives a sharp jerk of his head towards his prized Camaro that’s already starting to be covered in flurries of white.

“Let’s go Max, I don’t have all night.” Billy turns and is about to shuffle off the steps and back into the snow when French manicured nails suddenly find their way dug into his bare forearm. He raises a questioning and non-bloody eyebrow at Stevie.

“Need something, Princess?” Stevie doesn’t even seem to notice the annoying nickname that Billy had stuck her with since he’d zoomed into Hawkins. She just keeps looking at him with those deep brown eyes, filled with too much worry for someone she claims not to care for.

“You’re bleeding, Billy,” Billy gives an annoyed huff, blowing out a bit more smoke before roughly shaking off her grip.

“We’ve covered that already, Harrington.”

Stevie sets her jaw, pulling her hand back and wrapping her arms around herself.

“It’s gonna get infected if you leave it. Let me clean it.”

Billy stares at her for more than a couple seconds before a wry smile finds its way to his face. “Wouldn’t wanna get blood all over your expensive carpet, *Stevie*.”

Stevie rolls her eyes and yanks the hulking teenager through the door and slams it shut behind him.

“Umm, just hold tight Max. Play another mission. Do another quest. Whatever you guys do, just do, ok?” Stevie isn’t really looking for an answer as she drags Billy through the swinging door that leads to the kitchen, and out of the kid’s sight.

It’s quiet for a moment, the kids left staring at the door, not really knowing what to say to break the weird tension left behind from Billy’s grand entrance.

A loud slurp almost jolts the Party out of their seats.

El’s eyes are still tracing invisible patterns on the game board, the cup of cherry Kool-Aid resting at her lips. “It’s too cold for him to just be wearing a t-shirt,” she says matter-of-factly, before taking the dice from Will’s hand and rolling them on the table.

The others murmur their own two cents, turning the conversation to theories about how Billy got his face fucked up as they resume their game.

Max is still standing off to the side, feet seemingly stuck to the place where Billy had entered the Harrington residence. Still as a statue, her eyes are glued to kitchen door, her mind warring between staying put with her friends or going to see what had happened to her brot-*step*-brother.

A gentle, ghostly nudge against her hip pushes her in the direction of the empty chair next to Mike, her electric blue eyes shooting up and connecting with Eleven’s soft brown ones. A small and soft grin is hidden partially behind El’s cup but Max sees it all the same. Max gives the other girl a shaky smile. Shrugging off her backpack and unzipping the parka, Max settles in the chair and tries to lose herself back in the game.

Leave it to Dustin to stumble into something that doesn't concern him in the slightest.

All he wanted was to grab another pop before going back and kicking Lucas' ass in D&D for good measure, but noooo.

It's his own fault really; he'd seen Stevie and Billy disappear behind the door only minutes earlier. What'd he expect- for them to miraculously not be in there?

He'd ducked down by the side of the fridge before the duo noticed his entrance, peeking around to catch a glimpse of the two, his nosey nature keeping him from announcing his presence. He didn't want to speak to Billy if he could help it; hell, he didn't want Billy to *notice* him if he could help it. Crazy, potentially homicidal assholes are not a company he likes to keep.

Stevie's leaning over the sink, wetting a washcloth under the tap while Billy hauls himself up to sit on the counter, an almost completely smoked cigarette hanging haphazardly from between his teeth. Stevie turns to stand between his spread legs, plucking it out of an unimpressed Billy's mouth and flicking it into the sink.

"Hold still," Dustin barely catches Stevie's soft whisper before a slight hiss from Billy drowns it out.

Stevie presses the cloth against Billy's brow, staunching the blood flow. He says something low then, most likely something douche-y, that Dustin doesn't catch, Billy's good eyebrow quirks and his head tilts to the side, like he's waiting on a response from Stevie. A mocking smile is twisted on his mouth, blue eyes locked intensely on Stevie's face as he follows every move she makes.

Dustin can only see Stevie's back from where he's pressed up against the fridge, but he's good at reading people, especially if that person is one of his best friends.

Stevie's shoulders set, hands dropping to her hips and one cocking to the side, in the famous Annoyed Mom Pose. Her toe even starts tapping. Dustin suppresses a chuckle behind his fist. Billy's really in for it now.

Speak of the Devil, the dickhat seems to finally drop the tough guy act as he slouches suddenly, losing the tension that had kept his shoulders broad and straight. The expression drops off his face quick as a flash, and he hangs his head so all Dustin can see is the top of his stupid haircut.

Stevie drops her hands from her hips, dipping the cloth back under the running faucet before turning it off. She stills for a moment then, letting the rag drip off its excess water noisily into the sink.

Stevie tilts her head back slowly, the ends of her hair brushing her mid-back and lets out a heavy sigh. Her eyes are closed- Dustin can't see her face but he knows.

Stevie does this sometimes when she's stressed. Mostly when the Party is trying to explain to her how D&D works, or when she's reading Shakespeare for her English class. She tilts her head back until the lights shine down on her, like sun rays or fluorescent bulbs can quell the encroaching headache building behind her eyes.

Hey, like he said, she's one of his best friends. He pays attention to these sorta things.

He doesn't seem to be the only one paying attention, though.

Billy's head is raised again, eyes locked straight on the distracted girl in front of him.

His stare is less intense now, more like he's kind of just... looking at her. Well, maybe if Dustin was a bit more romantic, *gazing* would be a better word.

Maybe, the way Billy's lower lip is being rolled between his teeth and how his eyebrows are scrunched slightly seem like he's aching for

Stevie's big brown eyes to land back on his face.

Maybe, Dustin would think that the way Billy rests against the cabinets, shoulders low and knees parted, feet kicking back and forth like he's a kindergartener sitting in a too-big chair, would think that he looks soft.

Welcoming. Waiting. Wanting.

But Dustin is thirteen and his only experience with romance didn't end the best, so what the fuck does he know.

Stevie rolls her neck softly, another deep sigh exhaling from her chest before she shakes off the remaining droplets and turns to press it back into Billy's wound.

Dustin doesn't see Billy move but suddenly, his meaty hand is wrapped around Stevie's wrist. Stevie stills, and Dustin is about ready to bust in and do his best to beat the shit out of a guy ten times his size for manhandling his friend but stops just as quickly as his temper sky rocketed.

Billy's not squeezing her wrist, he's not even gripping it tightly. He's kinda cradling it. Resting it in his own hand.

His thumb starts to stroke her pulse point, a soft slow sweep, back and forth, almost in perfect tempo with the *tick-tock* of the kitchen clock hanging on the wall by the pantry. His hand spreads out, his fingers beginning to glide up Stevie's sweater-covered arm and over her shoulder and down her side before coming to rest at where her shorts meet her shirt.

Billy twists his fingers around the frayed edge of Stevie's *Hawkin's High Volleyball* sweatshirt from her Sophomore year.

Dustin can see the muscles flex in Stevie's calves as Billy tries to tug her forward, her feet planted to the kitchen tile as she holds her stance. The two older teens are locked in their positions for a heartbeat, then two, then three, before all the fight seems to drain

out of Stevie as she sways forward and presses her forehead against Billy's collarbone. Her shoulders drop, arms swinging at her sides and fingertips brushing mid thigh. Billy's hands slide around her back and come to rest underneath her sweater. He pulls her even closer to him, which Dustin doesn't see as very comfortable since there was only like a foot in between them to begin with. Stevie doesn't seem bothered though; she lifts her arms slowly, nails gliding lightly over the denim of Billy's legs to travel up his hips and loop her arms around his waist.

Dustin suddenly feels like he's intruding, almost like he's witnessing something that he shouldn't be seeing. Embarrassment floods his body and he knows he should turn tail and bail, but his brain apparently isn't linking up with his feet because they stay put.

Dustin is struck swiftly, that they look like a couple straight out of the Snow Ball. All that's missing is some Cyndi Lauper and they'd be set, swaying to the tune of "Time After Time", all wrapped up in each other and cozy as can be.

Stevie had turned her head so that her right cheek is resting on Billy's shoulder, her eyes shut softly. And Billy's face is buried in her neck, nose furrowed in her hair and his eyes are closed too.

They're not arguing, not bickering, not fighting; they're just… being with each other. Embracing each other. Being content.

Fuck, Dustin hadn't ever even seen his parents (when his dad still wanted to be a dad and stuck around) be like this together. Be this comfortable. Be this… tender.

He doesn't know why it's taken him so long to put two and two together and make four- probably because he sucks ass at math, but the realization is sudden and jolting.

Stevie and Billy are a thing. Like a *thing* thing.

This isn't friendly teenager everyday comforting. This isn't a pat on the back and a sympathetic eyebrow furrow. This is… something

else. Something Dustin doesn't understand.

How the hell could Stevie like Billy? The dude is a walking talking douche lord, Barbarian ass motherfucker with a dumbass haircut. And Stevie is the coolest chick he's ever met, even next to El. She carries both Farrah Fawcett hairspray and a demodog crushin' bat in her car; she should be opposite Kurt Russell in the next big movie that plays at the *The Hawk*.

A California dipshit and an Indiana badass. How in the hell did they match up?

The thoughts in Dustin's brain might as well be a Pong game, bouncing rapidly from side to side, trying to make sense of the unnatural union that he's paying witness too.

Maybe he stumbles forward in his confused fog or scuffs his sneaker against the tile or maybe his thoughts are just *that loud* to catch someone's attention, but a sharp voice cuts through the chaos in his head and nearly makes him piss himself.

Stevie's eyes are burning straight through him; she'd broken away from Billy and put some substantial distance between them, arms crossed tightly across her chest and hip jutted out to the side. Eyebrows raised sharply, she seemed to repeat a question Dustin hadn't heard before based on the annoyed look and tone she carried with it.

"You need something, dude?"

Dustin gaped at her for a moment before holding up the empty can he'd brought with him, and shaking it like it held all the answers Stevie was searching for.

"Pop," Dustin sputtered out and gave a hopefully convincing toothy grin. Stevie glared at him for a second longer before huffing and yanking the fridge open and tossing him one.

He kept his eyes on her the whole time, refusing to turn and figure out if it was Billy's murderous stare that had him feeling hot or if he

was actually on fire from his shock.

New can securely in hand, Dustin smiled plastically again in thanks and damn near tripped in his haste going back out through the kitchen door and away from the Twilight Zone episode he'd stumbled in to.

"What took you so long, man?" Mike questions offhandedly, rolling the dice and cursing lowly at the outcome as El tracks his movements with interested eyes.

Dustin holds his breath for a second, everything he's just spied on in the kitchen flashing behind his eyes rapid fire. *Friends don't lie* echoes ghostly in his ears, making the words *Stevie has lost it and is dating Billy Hargrove, who's gonna tie her up while El fixes whatever screw has gone loose in her head?* bubble up in his throat.

And he's gonna say it, he is. But then- something stops him.

He doesn't know if it's the image of Stevie, looking as relaxed as he's seen her in months while wrapped up in Billy's arms or if it's suddenly his mom's words, playing from a memory of right after his dad bailed and he was trying to explain to old nosey Mrs. Humphries next door what happened. His mom had saddled up next to him out of nowhere and squeezed his shoulder softly, and led him away from his neighbor. And then she had squatted down in front of him, brushed a curl away from his forehead, and had said so firmly but gently that it had stuck with him ever since. *"It's nobody's business but our own."*

Nobody's business but *her* own.

Dustin let's out a slow exhale.

“Uh, nothin’. I just couldn’t decide between Cola or Grape. Hardest decision of my life.”

Author's Note:

the title is from MisterWives "Our Own House".

i don't own Stranger Things or any of its affiliates.